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THE DISAPPEARANCE OF DAMON.

By JAMES RAYMOND PERRY.

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CHAPTER II.

At the breakfast table the following Friday morning the medical students were discussing a disappearance.

"I can't imagine what has become of Damon," said Ben Rice. "His friends haven't seen or heard anything of him since Wednesday night. It looks to me like foul play. Damon was a man of steady habits and the last fellow you would expect to drop out of sight this way. I don't believe he has done it intentionally."

Professor Gilman was eating breakfast over at his table. He happened to be alone at the table, and the students spoke loud enough for him to hear what was said.

Just then Mrs. Maxwell and her daughter came in to breakfast, and Rice, after saying good morning to them, asked, "Miss Maxwell, did you hear about Luther Damon's mysterious disappearance?"

The girl turned quickly and faced Rice. "No," she said. "Tell me about it."

"Why, he hasn't been seen at college nor at his boarding house since last Wednesday night. He boarded just around the corner, at 826 Wallace street, you know. The servant there says that about 9 o'clock Wednesday night a man called at the door and asked for Mr. Damon. She says he stood in the shadow while he was talking and that he can't describe his appearance. She wouldn't know him if she saw him again. She called Mr. Damon, who was up in his room, the man waiting for him outside meanwhile. Damon put on his hat and went out, and that is the last that any one has seen of him. The police have been notified and are searching for him, but have found no trace of him so far."

Rice, who had finished his breakfast, now came over and sat down in one of the vacant chairs at the other table.

"What gives an ugly look to the business," he continued, "is the fact that the day before Damon disappeared he quarreled with a student named Nutt, who boarded at the same place and whose room was next to Damon's. Just what the quarrel was about isn't clear, but high words between them were overheard by Nutt's roommate, who was in the next room. He says he heard one of them say: 'Take care! Don't go too far or you'll be sorry for it!' But he can't tell which one it was."

"The next night Nutt left the house directly after dinner and didn't return till 12 o'clock. One of the other boarders who came home about the same time saw him and thought he looked as if he had been drinking. The servant who saw the unknown man about 9 o'clock is quite sure it was not Nutt, whose face and voice she is perfectly familiar with, though she denies that she should know the man if she saw him again. The police have no idea the man was Nutt, but what they want to find out now is who was the man. They believe Nutt knows, and that he and the unknown man can tell what became of Damon."

"Nutt is popular among the students, and we don't any of us like to think he has done anything criminal, but circumstances make it look rather black for him."

Josephine Maxwell had listened intently, and when Rice paused she said, "Why, isn't it awful! Luther Damon was such a nice young man too."

"Yes," said Rice. "He was a very bright fellow. Of course we all hope he will turn up again safe, but there is apparently no reason for his absenting himself from college, and, altogether, it is very puzzling."

Professor Gilman had listened to all that Rice said, and now he asked, "Where does this Mr. Nutt claim to have spent Wednesday evening—the time that he was absent from his boarding place?"

"He says that when he left the house after dinner he went to the Lincoln hotel, where a friend of his was staying, and spent the whole evening with him in room 43. This friend, a man named Mason, was in the city for only a short time, and he left for Mexico the following morning. He told Nutt the name of the place he was going to, but Nutt says it was some difficult Mexican name, and he can't remember what it was. That makes it impossible to communicate with him."

"The hotel register shows that a man named Matthew Mason, who registered from New York, occupied room 43 that night, and that Thursday morning he was taken in one of the hotel carriages to the station of a railroad that has connection with a road running to Mexico. Nothing further is known of this man Mason at the Lincoln hotel. He had never been there before, so far as the hotel people know. The clerk describes him as a young man with smooth face, blue eyes and brown, curly hair, of medium height, and says he wore a brown check suit and brown derby hat. No one at the hotel remembers seeing Nutt there that night, but Nutt explains that he knew the location of No. 43 and went right up to the room without speaking to any one.

"Nutt admits that he drank a little that night. He says Mason had a flask in his room and that he drank from it

two or three times during the evening. He says it was about half past 11 when he left the hotel, and that the hotel clerk was talking to two or three people when he passed out through the office and appeared to take no notice of him. From the hotel he claims he went straight home. He pretends to be in as complete ignorance of Damon's whereabouts as anybody.

"Now the question is, Was Mason the man that called for Damon about 9 o'clock? The servant at Damon's boarding place is sure of only one fact—that is, that the man who called was considerably above the medium height. The clerk thinks Mason was little if any above medium height."

"The servant might be mistaken—or the clerk, for that matter," said the professor. "The fact that they disagree as to the man's height does not prove the man was not Mason."

The professor had become interested, and they talked for some time about the singular disappearance. After Rice left the dining room Josephine asked, "What is your opinion, Professor Gilman—do you think Mr. Damon has been murdered?"

"This young man," said the professor, "gave little information upon which to base an opinion. There are suspicious circumstances certainly, but disappearances are not infrequent, and it seems to me not improbable that this Mr. Damon may return safe and sound, with some good excuse for his absence. You knew the young man well?"

"Yes; we were quite good friends," said the girl. "I have met him often since Mr. Rice and Mr. Sexton came here to board. They were great friends, and Mr. Damon has been here to see them very often."

That evening Ben Rice brought startling news to the boarding house in Somerset street. "They've found Damon's body," he said. "The poor fellow was murdered. There's no doubt about it."

And then he proceeded to tell how the police had that day found in the basement of a vacant house in Taylor street, less than a stone's throw from Rusk college, the headless body of the unfortunate young man.

"Nutt had been arrested," continued Rice. "A student named Wyman has been found who states that he saw Nutt and Damon going up the steps of the vacant house together about half past 9 Wednesday night. He knows both Nutt and Damon well, and is positive that they were the ones he saw. Wyman was called out of town yesterday morning, and did not return till this afternoon. He then learned for the first time of Damon's disappearance, and at once informed the police of what he had seen Wednesday night. Acting upon this information, the police searched the vacant house in Taylor street, and found the body lying behind some old barrels and other rubbish in the basement."

"And now they've learned that Nutt possessed a key to this house. It seems that an uncle of his is the owner and that he gave his nephew a key some time ago. He sometimes referred house renters to his nephew. The house being close to the college, Nutt could let people in and show them the house without much trouble."

"I'm sorry for Nutt," concluded Rice. "It looks pretty bad for him. I'm afraid he'll have a hard job clearing himself. I can't believe he killed Damon, though. Charlie Nutt is the last fellow I should ever suspect of pre-meditating a murder, but this one looks as if it was pre-meditated, and if it was really Nutt that Wyman saw with Damon that night it certainly looks as if he must have some guilty knowledge of the murder, if nothing more."

Josephine Maxwell had shuddered a little at the tale of the gruesome discovery the police had made that day. It seemed impossible to think of Luther Damon dead, the young man whom she had seen around the house so often during the last few months. He was such a bright, gay young fellow. Everybody had seemed to like him, and to think that any one could have it in his heart to murder him seemed monstrous.

"Professor Gilman," said Rice, "the students at our college are hoping that you will undertake to clear up this mystery. There are not half a dozen fellows in the whole college who are willing to believe that Nutt is responsible for this crime. In spite of the black look things have they think there must be some mistake. They believe there is a mystery too deep for them to fathom—too deep for the police to fathom. In fact, they fear that if it is left to the police they will cook up a case of some sort against Nutt and convict him, whether or no. They believe that you can unravel the mystery if anybody can, and several with whom I have talked asked me to urge you to undertake the work. Will you?"

"My dear young sir, it is quite impossible," said Professor Gilman. "I already have more than I can attend to during my limited time here. To undertake new duties is not to be thought of."

"Well, at least you may be able to give some advice. We will report new developments as they occur, and you can tell us their probable import."

To this the professor only shook his head.

But later, when Josephine Maxwell told him she wished he could find it possible to devote some time to the case—that she very much wished the true criminal, the real murderer of Luther Damon, should be discovered and punished—the matter took on a somewhat different look.

"If she didn't look so much like Bessie," he said to himself, "I shouldn't think of doing it. But she desires it, and somehow in pleasing her it seems as if I were pleasing Bessie."

And thus once more was Professor Gilman, most reluctant of detectives, made to undertake the solution of a mysterious crime.

CHAPTER III.

At luncheon the next day Professor Gilman said: "I find I have a little leisure this afternoon—Professor Loomis has been called out of town, and our work requires his presence as well as mine—so if you young men care to guide me round to the vacant house in Taylor street I will take a look at the place where Damon's body was found."

"We shall be very glad to," replied Rice, and an hour later he and Sam Sexton, a fellow student, accompanied by Professor Gilman, ascended the steps to the house in Taylor street.

Professor Gilman went down into the basement and had Rice point out to him the place where Damon's body had been found. He looked about him somewhat curiously, but did not remain there long. Returning to the floor above, he remarked, "We might just take a look through the house," and followed by the medical students he passed from one room to another till he had entered every room in the building. The rooms were for the most part vacant and dusty, but in some of them were found odd pieces of old and worthless furniture and other rubbish—articles left by the former occupants of the house.

"Do you know how long the house has been unoccupied?" inquired the professor.

"Nutt told me the tenants moved out the 1st of May—four months ago," answered Sexton.

Professor Gilman did not explain his motive in examining the rooms so thoroughly. Perhaps he had none.

"Now, suppose we walk around and take a glance at the body," he said. "I understand you to say the remains are lying at an undertaker's establishment near here."

"Yes," said Rice. "It's not more than a five minutes' walk."

"Had Mr. Damon relatives in the city?" the professor asked as they were walking to the undertaker's.

"No. His father and mother are both dead. I've heard him speak of an uncle living in Arizona, but I don't know his address, and none of the people at the college knows it."

"So he has not been communicated with, of course. There are no near friends in the city, persons especially interested in him?"

"Not that I know of. He had many friends among the students, but none that I know of outside our college circle."

By this time they were at the undertaker's. Entering, they were shown into the room where the headless body lay upon a marble slab. It was covered over with a sheet. As it happened, a police detective named Simon Hopper was there when they arrived. He was one of the two men who had found the body in the basement at 430 Taylor street. The clothes in which the dead man had been dressed had been removed, and the detective was about to do them up in a bundle preparatory to taking them to police headquarters for use as an exhibit at the trial should there be one.

Professor Gilman was introduced to Simon Hopper by Rice as the detective who was to represent the friends of Damon in the case. Hopper had heard of Professor Gilman and looked upon him now with some awe. The professor took no notice of that, however, but said: "If you don't mind, I should like to examine those articles."

"You saw this suit upon the dead man, did you?" he inquired, peering over his spectacles at Hopper.

"Yes, sir; this is the suit the murdered man had on, sir," replied the detective.

"Ah, you've already settled in your mind that the man was murdered, have you?" inquired the professor.

"I should say there was small doubt of that, sir," replied Hopper, with a little laugh.

Professor Gilman held up one article of clothing after another and looked them over with critical eyes. They were parts of a brown suit.

"You recognize this suit as one worn by Mr. Damon, do you?" he asked of Rice.

"Yes; I've seen him in it dozens of times."

Hopper took up the vest and, turning the buckle strap inside out, silently held it up for the professor's inspection. There, where the tailor had written the purchaser's name, the professor read "M. L. Damon" and the name and address of the tailor.

"Ah!" said the professor. "That mark is important. It identifies the clothing very well."

"And this ring," he said, holding up an intaglio ring, graven with the initial "D" in old English—"do you recognize this as one worn by Damon?"

"Yes," said Rice.

The professor was examining the inside of the ring. "Oh, here are the initials," he said. "M. L. D." That stands for M. Luther Damon. Well, there seems to be pretty good evidence that this ring belonged to Damon. It was on the hand of the body when you

found it, was it?" he asked of Hopper. "Yes, sir, on the third finger," said the detective.

"And this cardcase," continued the professor, picking up one more article—"this was in the vest pocket, was it?"

The detective replied affirmatively. "Mr. Martin Luther Damon," read the professor, drawing forth one of the cards. There were a half dozen others in the case, and the professor glanced at each.

"And were these the only articles found in the pockets?" Professor Gilman inquired.

"Yes; nothing else was found," replied Hopper.

"No watch, keys, pocketbook, pocketknife, money?" queried he.

"No."

"No pocket handkerchief?"

"No."

The professor laid down the cardcase and turned toward the silent object lying under the white sheet. The sheet outlined a human form, all save the head. That was missing.

"Would you like to take a look at it, sir?" asked the undertaker.

The professor was silent a moment. "No, I think not," he said and turned toward the door.

In the street outside Rice and Sexton said they had an errand at the college buildings and parted from the professor. That gentleman walked for a full square toward the boarding house in Somerset street and then, deliberately,



"And this ring?" he said, holding up an intaglio ring.

ly, as if it had been his intention from the first, turned and retraced his steps. He re-entered the undertaker's establishment, and it was fully 15 minutes before he came forth once more. This time he walked directly toward his boarding place.

When he reached the house, he started to ascend the steps. Then he paused and glanced at his watch. It was only a little past 4. Turning away, he walked to the next corner. A few steps more brought him to 826 Wallace street.

A pretty servant girl answered his ring. Professor Gilman looked benignly at her through his spectacles.

"I am Professor Gilman," he said, "and am interested in knowing all that I can learn about the disappearance of the unfortunate young man who boarded here."

"Yes, sir," said the young woman. Her lips trembled a little as she spoke, and she looked troubled. The professor did not seem to notice it, but said pleasantly: "I am told that a young woman employed here answered a ring at the door last Wednesday night and saw a man who asked for Mr. Damon. Perhaps you are the person."

"Yes, sir," repeated the girl.

"Well, my informant explained to me that you found it very difficult to describe the man's appearance owing to the fact that the evening was dark and that he seemed to seek to remain in shadow as much as possible."

"Yes, sir," the girl said again.

"I am told that you feel certain of only one thing, and that is that the caller was quite tall—considerably above the average."

"Ye-es, sir," the girl said hesitatingly, shifting her weight from one foot to the other as she leaned a little against the half open door.

"Am I right in understanding that while you could not feel certain about it it is nevertheless your impression that the man had a smooth face and that from his appearance you should judge him to be not over 21 or 22 years old?"

"I—I think so, sir," stammered the girl, and then added in confusion, "No, sir—that is, I can't tell, sir. It was dark, and the man stood back out of the light."

"Exactly," said the professor, as coolly as if he had not just surprised her into giving a much more accurate description of the mysterious caller than the police had got from her.

"I must beg your pardon for keeping you at the door to answer so many questions," he continued, with a politeness that was pleasing to the girl. "Is your—your lady of the house—her name has slipped me for the moment."

"Mrs. Mayer," interposed the girl.

"Ah, yes, Mrs. Mayer! Is she in?"

"No, sir; she has gone down town this afternoon."

"Do you think there would be any objection to my going up to Mr. Damon's room for a few moments?"

Professor Gilman was not at all the sort of man to awaken distrust, and the girl answered quite promptly, evidently relieved that the talk had drifted away from the caller: "I don't think so, sir. I will show you up to the room."

They entered, and the professor walk-

ed over to a door that seemed to lead to a closet. "Please remain near enough to see that I don't take anything," he said, with one of his wintry smiles, as he opened the door and peered into the closet.

The girl watched him wonderingly, a little doubtful whether this mild-mannered elderly gentleman was in quite his right mind.

"There seems to be only one suit of clothes here," said the professor, "and this is a heavy winter suit. Do you remember whether Mr. Damon has worn more than one kind of suit recently?"

"Yes, sir; sometimes he wore a brown suit, and sometimes a black coat and vest and gray pants."

"You don't know which suit he had on when he left the house Wednesday night, do you?"

"No, sir; I didn't see him when he went out. I came up to the room and told him Mr.—I told him a man wanted to see him down at the door, and then I went back into the kitchen."

"Well, neither the brown nor the black suit appears to be hanging in his closet. You don't know of one having been removed by any one since the disappearance of the young man, do you?"

"No, sir."

"It may easily enough be explained, though," said the professor. "He may have sent one of the suits to his tailor's for pressing and cleaning. That would account for its absence."

The professor was silent for a moment and surveyed the room curiously. Then he said: "A moment ago you said that you came up here that night to tell Mr. Damon that Mr. Somebody wanted to see him. You stopped before speaking the name. Do you mind telling me what name you were about to utter?"

The girl's face grew red and then whitened, but she made no answer.

"You might have fancied the caller resembled some person that you knew," said the professor reassuringly, "and inadvertently have been about to mention his name to Mr. Damon. Such things sometimes happen, you know."

The professor's tone was encouraging and his manner such as to inspire confidence.

The poor girl looked sorely puzzled, but remained silent.

"For instance," said the professor, "in the dim light this tall young man with smooth face and smiling mouth might have reminded you strongly of some one—of Mr. Rice, say—whom you have often seen with Mr. Damon and whom you would in all likelihood recognize even in a shadow. He might have reminded you of him, and your impression that it was he might have been so strong that when you came up here that night you may have said to Mr. Damon, 'Mr. Rice is down at the door waiting for you.'"

A frightened look had come into the girl's face, and she took hold of a chair near her.

"As a matter of fact," continued Professor Gilman, "isn't that precisely what you did do? Your impression then was and still is that the man who called for Mr. Damon that night was his friend Benjamin Rice."

The mild manner of the professor had given place to sternness, and the girl began to sob.

"It was Mr. Rice who called, was it not?" Professor Gilman persisted.

"Yes, sir," said the girl and sobbed yet louder.

"There, my girl, there," said the professor soothingly. "Don't feel bad. Mr. Rice told you not to tell any one, I suppose. But don't feel concerned because you have told me. I give you my word that I believe Mr. Rice will get into no serious trouble through your confession. Do not tell him, nor any one, that you have told me it was he who called. It is just as well to keep it a secret for awhile longer."

And with that the professor departed, and as he walked back toward the boarding house in Somerset street he smiled more than once at something that pleased him hugely.

TO BE CONTINUED.

The Camel.

Before starting on a journey across the desert the Egyptians take care that the humps of their camels are in good condition. This is the camel's reserve supply of fat, which helps to sustain the animal if in case of emergency it is temporarily debarred from food. The camel can stow about 1½ gallons of water in its capacious stomach, and it is satisfied if it can replenish this every third day. Between these intervals it will carry a load of about 400 pounds a distance of 80 or 90 miles.

Dog Must Look Out For Himself.

Columbia State, Saturday: Following the decision of a few days ago on the rights of the dog the supreme court has handed down another decision relating thereto. This time the court takes the position that when a dog gets on a railroad track it is the business of the dog to get out of the way of the train and not of the train to get out of the way of the dog. In other words if a dog is killed by a train the railroad company is not liable for damages as in the case of stock.

GENERAL KING ON THE FILIPINOS.

Brigadier General Charles King who returned from the Philippines a short time ago, in a letter to the Milwaukee Journal published recently, states that the capability of the Filipinos for self-government cannot be doubted and if given a fair start, they could look out for themselves infinitely better than our people imagine. He says they rank far higher than the Cubans, or the uneducated Negroes to whom the United States has given the right of suffrage.

Miscellaneous Reading.

THE HORSELESS CARRIAGE.

It is Constantly Growing in Popularity and Practicability.

The automobile, or horseless carriage, is a fixture. That fact is generally settled, for today there are one million of dollars invested in their manufacture.

The idea of the horseless carriage is probably as old as the steam engine; but it has only been within the past few years that practicable road machines have come into general use. The French people have made more headway than anybody else along this line. Until a short time ago, they had pretty nearly the whole field to themselves; but within the past six months, or such a matter, the American inventors have made strides that indicate the leadership of the world, in another six months, of the same kind of work.

Throughout France, the country roads are almost uniformly as good as are the streets in the more progressive American cities, and furnish ideal tracks for the automobiles. Races between the machines of different makers are quite common, and 12 miles an hour for a distance of 100 miles, or more, is not at all unusual. Up to the present time Mr. Charron, a Frenchman, enjoys the distinction of being the leading automobile manufacturer of the world. His machines range in price from \$1,200 to about \$12,000.

The motive power for the automobiles is generated in different ways. Electricity and compressed air have both proved quite satisfactory; but the ordinary steam engine, with petroleum for fuel, seems to give the best results. Electricity and compressed air are kept in storage reservoirs capable of holding enough power to run the machine from 6 to 12 hours on a stretch. There is little for the driver to do, except to regulate speed by keeping his hand constantly on the throttle. The petroleum machines are also pretty nearly automatic, and generally more convenient and desirable, for the reason that fuel and water are more easily obtainable at out of the way places.

Hundreds of automobiles are to be seen daily on the streets of New York and other northern cities. Several large companies have recently been organized to manufacture them, and companies have also been chartered for the purpose of operating them as common carriers in most of the leading cities of the country. It is expected that where the roads are at all suitable, the automobiles will soon do away with horse vehicles, especially for carrying passengers.

The most improved automobiles are equal to the task of climbing almost any hill that is practicable for horses and vehicles. They can travel, too, over pretty rough roads; but they are liable to stick in the mud almost anywhere. They require good roads, or it is no go.

Thomas A. Edison has lately turned his entire attention to the automobile. When he gives time to anything of the kind, surprising results usually follow. He is reported to have said last week that he would be heard from after a few weeks more with some inventions that would come fully up to expectations. He would not give any intimation as to the nature of promised inventions; but he did say that to be of practical value, an automobile must be noiseless, easy running, capable of going at least 150 miles without being re-charged, and simple enough to be operated by a child. It is safe to assume that it is a machine of this kind that Mr. Edison proposes to produce.

There has been no automobiles down in this corner of the country yet. It will be a long time, too, before they put in their appearance. The roads, generally, are too bad. At any rate the people who live to the west, on the Howell's Ferry road, or to the east beyond Waters' Hill, need not be in any hurry to dispose of their draft horses and mules for the present.

BIRDS AS BREEDERS OF CONSUMPTION.—Dr. A. Tucker Wise, an English physiologist, records the case of more than thirty persons who became attacked by tuberculosis apparently through association with caged birds. That canaries, parrots, etc., are commonly subjected to tuberculosis, Dr. Wise considers to be an established fact, and warns owners of birds of the danger of avian infection. The practice of allowing birds to place their beaks in contact with the lips is a risky and dangerous proceeding as regards liability to receive bacilli in this way if the bird is not healthy. Flies can also convey filth, and with it disease germs, from the cage to human food, or the dust of dried excrement and mucks may pollute the air of any room in which birds are kept. Feeding and nursing sick birds (including parrots) and blowing the dust and husk from the seed and cleaning the cage are not without danger. The canary or any other bird kept in the kitchen, is a positive peril to the household, as by fluttering and whisking the dust from its cage or mucus from its beak the food of a whole family can be contaminated. It is not surprising, he observes, taking into consideration the unnatural and unhealthy life to which man subjects the domestic animals, especially birds confined in small cages, that these captives should become diseased, and pollute the air with pathogenic germs.